

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Jones County School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: February 6, 2006

Date of Report: February 22, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Child find data
- Pre-school screening data
- Interagency plan
- Student files
- Parent rights brochure
- Performance goals & indicator scale
- Suspension/expulsion data (table C)

- Personnel certification & licensure files
- In-service needs & assessments
- Newspaper
- Comprehensive plan
- TAT
- Surveys
- SAT 9 data table D

Promising practice

The steering committee determined Jones County School uses data-based decision making to review and analyze school district data to determine progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators based on data collected in students files and documentation of in-service reviews of standardized test scores.

Jones County school analyzed school district-level data to determine if the school is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators. A group of four teachers attended the Data Retreat in June 2004. The teachers reviewed data of both general and special education students to assess progress and needs. The teachers met in groups of content area to determine needs at the beginning of the year and mid-year. DACS testing scores were also reviewed and analyzed. As a result the district implemented additional services and programs to increase student performance. Accelerated Reading/ Math enhanced with Academy of Reading/ Math and Kurzweil software for some struggling students were implemented school wide K-12. Title services were increased and expanded through high school in 2005-06 school year. These new programs were explained to the school board and to parents at Parent Teacher Conferences.

The district has also provided additional opportunities for students to succeed and make progress toward state goals. The district has implemented an additional ninth grade reading and ninth grade writing course as required high school subjects for the past three school years. An assisted study hall is provided for special education students and regular education students in the high school for the past twelve years. An assisted study hall is provided in the elementary school for the past two years. In the past five years, three graduating students have had Kurzweil Technology arranged in coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation as part of the transition for post secondary education.

Campus provides parents with updated student progress throughout the year via internet.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded Jones County Schools meets requirement under the provision child find based on documentation of public newspaper articles and preschool screenings. Jones County school has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay. The district has established procedures for collecting, maintaining and reporting current and accurate data on all child identification activities.

There are no private schools in the district.

The district ensures special education and related services are provided in accordance with requirements during Extended School Year.

The steering committee concluded Jones County School's comprehensive plan addresses the procedural safeguards regarding suspension and expulsions of students.

The district personnel files, including evaluations, indicate the school district employs certified special education personnel who have special education endorsements as required in state rules.

The steering committee has determined all special education staff meets state certifications and licensure requirements.

Needs improvement

The steering committee determined Jones County School needs to improve in the area of personnel and professional development and is in the process of improving in this area. It is noted that three of the fifteen staff surveyed do not feel they have input into the planning and training activities related to students with disabilities.

Updated paraprofessional training for the new staff is planned for 2005-2006, as well as in-services targeting specific disability areas. Plans are being developed to conduct formal evaluations of paraprofessional and assistants.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Through interview the monitoring team cannot validate the steering committee's finding that the district's data retreat process is a promising practice in that it is a process required for all schools to implement to promote annual yearly progress. The monitoring team cannot validate the implementation of Campus as a promising practice as there is no data to support that this implementation has made a difference in student performance.

Through interview with staff and observations the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings that the district implements a wide variety of programs as a promising practice under the provision general supervision. The district has implemented the following programs in order to meet educational needs of their students: Accelerated Reading and Math, Academy of Reading and Math, increased Title services and expanded these services through high school, assisted study hall for students in high school and elementary and utilizing such technology as Kurzweil.

Meets requirements

Through interview of staff and file review the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings as meeting requirement under the provision general supervision.

Needs improvement

Through interview of staff the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings as needing improvement under the provision general supervision.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Part C data
- IDEA application for funds
- FERPA
- Suspension/expulsion data
- Age & placement alternative data table L

- Regulations policies/procedures of office of Education Services & Support/Special Education Program

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined Jones County School meets requirement under free appropriate public education based on parent surveys and feed back, the number of children screened, the number of children exiting part C and moving to an IEP. Jones County School does provide a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities.

The district has had no students suspended or expelled. But the district comprehensive plan ensures that the appropriate procedures are in place for suspension /expulsion.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through interview of staff and file review the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings as meeting requirement under the provision free appropriate public education.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student files
- Comprehensive plan
- IEP documents
- LEP policies
- Assessment data
- Surveys

Promising practice

The steering committee determined Jones County School meets this requirement based on files and surveys reviewed, appropriate written notices are provided and informed consent is obtained before assessments were administered as part of the evaluation or re-evaluation.

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined Jones County School ensures evaluation and reevaluation procedures and instruments meet requirement. Files reviewed indicate Multidisciplinary Team Reports document all required content and TAT is utilized to assist in identification of students with disabilities.

The steering committee determined Jones County School district re-evaluations are conducted in accordance with procedural safeguards requirements to determine if the student continues to meet eligibility for special education.

Needs improvement

The steering committee determined Jones County School needs improvement in the area of summarizing functional evaluation information, documenting that reports were given to parents and documenting parent input into the evaluation process.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Through file review the monitoring team cannot validate the practice of providing appropriate written notice and obtaining informed consent prior to evaluation as a promising practice under the provision appropriate evaluation as it is required as part of the comprehensive evaluation process.

Meets requirements

Through file review and staff interview the monitoring team validates some of the steering committee findings as meeting requirement under the provision appropriate evaluation. Evaluation instruments used by the district meet requirement, multidisciplinary team reports contain all required content and the district utilizes the teacher assistance team to assist in identification of student with disabilities.

Needs improvement

Through file review the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings as needing improvement under the provision appropriate evaluation. Functional evaluation results were not consistently summarized into a report form, parent input into evaluation was not consistently documented, and documenting that reports were given to parents.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:21. Transition to preschool program. Each local school district shall develop policies and procedures for the transition of children participating in the early intervention program under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) who are eligible for participation in preschool programs under Part B of IDEA.

ARSD 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures. School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following: 1) A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child's IEP. 2) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. 3) The evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified;

Through a review of two student files, the monitoring team concluded the district's procedures for transitioning children from the Part C program to the Part B program did not meet minimum requirements. Referral documentation was not available in either record. Through interview, the teacher stated all previous evaluation information used for Part C eligibility was used for Part B eligibility; however, there was no documentation to support this occurred. There was no evidence of parental prior notice/consent or parent input into the initial evaluation for the Part B program. In one of the student records the parents expressed concern that their child may have autism after the district determined the child eligible for Part B services. The district did respond with additional evaluation, however, had the district acquired input from the parents during the initial evaluation the child would have been evaluated in all areas of suspected disability at the time of initial placement.

Through file review the monitoring team determined a third student on the 2004 child count did not receive a sufficiently comprehensive evaluation to support the disability category 545. There were no

ability scores or achievement scores in the file, no functional evaluation results summarizing the education impact of the hearing loss, and no report summarizing the hearing evaluation.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parents' rights document

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district informs parents of their rights and includes all required content. Parents have been fully informed in their native language of all information relevant for consent. If required, an interpreter is present. The comprehensive plan addresses parental rights to inspect and receive their child's special education records. The district has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaint actions and has procedures in place for responding to requests for due process that ensure compliance.

Out of compliance

The steering committee determined the district is out of compliance in the area of surrogate parents. There is no form in the files to indicate that the foster parent was assigned the surrogate parent.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review the monitoring team validates all of the steering committee findings as meeting requirement under the provision procedural safeguards.

Out of compliance

ARSD:24:05:30:15. Surrogate parents. Each school district shall establish procedures for the assignment of a surrogate parent to ensure that the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified and the district, after reasonable effort, cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent or if the child is a ward of the state. The district shall ensure that a person selected as a surrogate has no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate represents and has knowledge and skills that ensure representation of the child. The district is responsible for the training and certification of surrogate parents and shall maintain a list of persons who may serve as surrogate parents.

Through staff interview the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings under the provision procedural safeguards. The district has not maintained a list of persons who may serve as a surrogate or trained them for these services.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student files
- Comprehensive plan
- Transition data
- Office of Human Services-Voc. Rehabilitation
- Statewide assessment policies
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee of Jones County School has determined it ensures the district written notices include all required content and is provided for all IEP meetings. The IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership.

The steering committee determined Jones County School meets requirement in the area of transition. The district ensures that transition is a coordinated set of activities reflecting student strengths and interests.

The steering committee has determined that Jones County School ensures that an appropriate IEP is developed and is in effect for each eligible child.

Needs improvement

The steering committee determined the district does not consistently ensure that each IEP contains all required content. In some files the present levels of performance did not show a direct relationship with other IEP components or a direct link to the functional behavior assessment. Although the parents were present and had input at the IEP meetings, it was not always documented in the IEP. Transfer of rights is noted in the IEP, but there is not a parent signature to indicate the parent was notified.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The staff at Jones County Schools implements transition services with the end in mind. Building successful young adults is the objective, and at Jones County, transition services are creative and consist in preparing students for adult life. Teaching self-advocacy skills, building partnerships with employers, earning the trust and respect of students and setting high expectations for students even after they have graduated are ways that the staff helps students to maximize their potential in the adult world. Graduates of Jones County are successful in employment and further education. In the last five years the school district and Vocational Rehabilitation have ensured three graduating students had Kurzweil technology in place as part of their transition to post secondary education.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team validates the steering committee's findings under the provision Individualized Education Program. In addition to those findings identified by the steering committee the monitoring team concurs the district consistently documents the transfer of rights within the required timeline.

Needs improvement

Through file review the monitoring team validates the some of the steering committee findings under the provision Individualized Education Program. Parent input was not consistently documented on the present level of performance. The monitoring team also determined when the district addresses transition services it needs to consistently address services/service goals that can be met within the annual review period.

Through file review the monitoring team determined the district does not consistently ensure all areas of the IEP process is considered. In one file, the Individualized Education Program for a preschool student did not contain all required pages. The district had not addressed the special considerations or the modifications this student may need to benefit from instruction.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02. Development, review, and revision of individualized education program. In developing, reviewing, and revising each student's individualized education program, the team shall consider the strengths of the student and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the student, and as appropriate, the results of the student's performance on any general state or district-wide assessment programs.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include: A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including: For each student beginning at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate by the placement committee, a statement of the needed transition services.

Through file review the monitoring team determined when the district addresses the present level of performance of the individualized education program it does not consistently ensure the educational strengths and needs of the student, including transition link to the most recent evaluation. In five of eight files reviewed the strengths and needs identified on the present level of performance did not link back to evaluation because the functional was either not done or not summarized into a report form.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student files
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys
- Data from state web site

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined that all children receive services in the least restrictive environment with the necessary supports to ensure progress. The supports include assisted study hall last period of each for all students, time with teachers after school, arranged peer tutors, and the use of technology like the Kurzweil and Academy of Reading and Math.

Needs improvement

The steering committee has determined that Jones County School needs improvement in the area of least restrictive environment. Most surveys indicated that the staff feels there is not enough time during the week to complete tasks such as meetings, modifying curriculum, consulting, etc. A portion of the staff surveyed indicated they did not receive adequate information and supports to implement IEPs.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

Through file review and staff interview the monitoring team concurs with the steering committee findings meeting requirement under the provision least restrictive environment. The various supports provided by the district assist in meeting this requirement.

Needs improvement

Through staff interview the monitoring team concurs with the steering committee findings needing improvement under the provision least restrictive environment.